

# INDIGENOUS LINKS



UPPER-INTERMEDIATE

Akiva Weiss



## Drawings about Sakha Culture by Yakutia Access Students



## CHAPTER I: MYTHS, LEGENDS, EPICS

# 1

### Grammar Focus

(a) Present Simple/Present Continuous (review)	3
(b) Rhetorical, Direct, Indirect Questions	9
(c) Past Modals of Deduction	20
(d) Prepositions	19

### Real-life Skills

(a) MOOCs	14
(b) Applications to Study Abroad	18
(c) Letters of Motivation	19

### Writing

(a) Contrastive Rhetoric	17
(b) Great Speeches	24
(c) Applying to Universities and Jobs	19

### Critical Thinking Focus

(a) Tradition and Globalization	12
(b) Religious Freedom	10
(c) The Ethics of Historicity: Eminent Domain and Post-War Integration	21
(d) The Artist and their Art	23

### Project-Based Learning

(a) Deconstructing and Analyzing Famous Speeches	24
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## CHAPTER 2: MUSIC

# 27

### Grammar Focus

(a) Present Perfect and Past Perfect Continuous	29
(b) Prepositions of Music	33
(c) <i>Enough</i> and <i>Too</i>	45
(d) Comparative and Superlative Adjectives	49

### Real-life Skills

(a) Decoding Lyrics	35
(b) Charts and Graphs	42
(c) Using Keywords	44
(d) Venn Diagrams	44
(e) Blogs and Vlogs	51

### Writing

(a) Mind Maps and Essays	38
(b) Sequence in Narratives	30
(c) Turning Data into Persuasive Arguments	43

### Critical Thinking Focus

(a) Creativity	36
(b) Music and Social Consciousness	40
(c) Code-Switching and Social Capital	39
(d) Music and Environment	48

### Project-Based Learning

(a) River Adventures	50
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## CHAPTER 3: ENVIRONMENT

# 53

<b>Grammar Focus</b>	
(a) Future Perfect	<b>56</b>
(b) Future Continuous	<b>57</b>
(c) Future Probability	<b>70</b>
(d) <i>Used to</i> vs. <i>Would</i>	<b>77</b>
<b>Real-life Skills</b>	
(a) Investigative Research	<b>71</b>
(b) Metacognitive Skills	<b>79</b>
(c) Reaching Consensus	<b>80</b>
(d) Entrepreneurship	<b>66</b>
(e) Commenting Online	<b>72</b>
<b>Writing</b>	
(a) Personal and Business E-mails	<b>63</b>
(b) Resolving Conflicts	<b>83</b>
<b>Critical Thinking Focus</b>	
(a) The Role of Corporate Responsibility	<b>62</b>
(b) Cause and Effect	<b>61</b>
(c) What You Eat	<b>84</b>
<b>Project-Based Learning</b>	
(a) Investigating Environmental Problems	<b>86</b>

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## CHAPTER 4: CRITICAL THINKING

# 87

<b>Grammar Focus</b>	
(a) Reported Speech	<b>95</b>
(b) The Language of Persuasion	<b>109</b>
(c) Carrying	<b>123</b>
<b>Real-life Skills</b>	
(a) Identifying an Agenda	<b>95</b>
(b) Evaluating Texts for Authenticity	<b>94</b>
(c) Persuasion	<b>101</b>
<b>Writing</b>	
(a) Constructing a Coherent Argument	<b>103</b>
(b) Describing Images	<b>106</b>
(c) Essays from Quotes	<b>128</b>
<b>Critical Thinking Focus</b>	
(a) Deriving Meaning from Context	<b>91</b>
(b) Trauma and Responsibility	<b>115</b>
(c) Static vs. Evolving Norms	<b>117</b>
(d) Paternalism	<b>120</b>
(e) The Ethics of Convenience	<b>123</b>
(f) Victory Narratives	<b>124</b>

## CHAPTER 5: ACTIVITIES

# 131

<b>Grammar Focus</b>	
(a) Compound Adjectives	<b>134</b>
(b) Defining and Non-Defining Relative Clauses	<b>139</b>
(c) Conditionals	<b>143</b>
(d) Passive Voice	<b>152</b>
<b>Real-life Skills</b>	
(a) Extrapolating Quotations	<b>147</b>
(b) CV Writing	<b>148</b>
(c) Identifying and Addressing Workplace Harassment	<b>155</b>
<b>Writing</b>	
(a) Dialogues	<b>147</b>
(b) Justification	<b>157</b>
(c) Obsolescence	<b>137</b>
(d) Children in the Workplace	<b>157</b>
<b>Critical Thinking Focus</b>	
(a) Sustainability	<b>137</b>
(b) Difficult Decisions	<b>147</b>
(c) High/Low Culture	<b>151</b>
(d) Artificial Intelligence	<b>136</b>
(e) Equal Opportunity	<b>156</b>
<b>Project-Based Learning</b>	
(a) Board games	<b>160</b>

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## CHAPTER 6: SOCIAL STRUCTURES

# 161

<b>Grammar Focus</b>	
(a) Past Perfect	<b>166</b>
(b) Expressing Permission, Prohibition, and Obligation	<b>169</b>
(c) Articulating Counterfactuals	<b>177</b>
(d) Discussion Openers	<b>182</b>
(e) Wishing and Hoping	<b>187</b>
(f) Politeness	<b>190</b>
<b>Real-life Skills</b>	
(a) Referencing	<b>176</b>
(b) Paraphrasing and Plagiarism	<b>176</b>
(c) Action Research	<b>179</b>
(d) Giving and Receiving Criticism	<b>180</b>
(e) Non-Verbal Communication	<b>188</b>
<b>Writing</b>	
(a) Peer Review	<b>191</b>
(b) Current Events	<b>193</b>
(c) Language and Identity	<b>172</b>
<b>Critical Thinking Focus</b>	
(a) Religion and Tradition	<b>164</b>
(b) Culture and Criticism	<b>181</b>
(c) Gender Gaps	<b>192</b>
(d) Seclusion, Exclusion, Disenfranchisement	<b>194</b>
<b>Project-Based Learning</b>	
(a) Violence Against Indigenous Women	<b>196</b>

## CHAPTER 7: VISUALS

# 197

### Grammar Focus

(a) Linking Words of Contrast	200
(b) Inversion	203
(c) Definite, Indefinite, Zero Articles	204
(d) <i>If</i> or <i>Whether</i>	206
(e) Subjunctive	209
(f) Unless	210
(g) Phrasal Verbs	212

### Critical Thinking Focus

(a) Body Shaming	200
(b) Equilibrating	206
(c) Co-Existing	208
(d) Managing Freedoms	210
(e) Personalities	212

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome. That's first.

This textbook is meant to help facilitate your journey through the upper intermediate stage of the English language. But that's not all! We created this textbook to help you engage the real world. We challenge you to research hot issues and suggest potential solutions, and write real letters of motivation to universities that you can actually use. This book will enhance your digital literacy skills and help you determine the validity of the information you read, listen to, or see online. This book will even prepare you for your future careers by practicing techniques to reach an agreement when your officemates have differing opinions.

Challenging you to engage thought-provoking and often difficult topics is not done out of a desire to make your learning experience difficult, but out of respect. The more analytical, creative, and discerning your minds become, the more successful you will be in your future professions. So, we challenge you to think independently, originally, and critically by incorporating your own life experiences into this language-learning experience.

The themes that provide the foundation for the lessons in this book all come from indigenous populations in Russia and the United States. For example, students from Siberia brought to our attention environmental challenges around Lake Baikal, the world's deepest lake and nearly one-quarter of the world's freshwater; we ask you to research their predicament and suggest alternative ways to generate energy without negative impacts on the surrounding nature and the indigenous groups populating it. We also challenge you to engage changes in social structures, from the evolving role of gender among the Nivkh people of Sakhalin to the problem of violence against women on many Native American reservations in the United States.

In order to think critically, we must utilize all of the information we have available to us. Therefore, we will explore passages directly addressing indigenous populations, as well as the dominant culture in which they live. It would be careless of us to try to understand groups while ignoring their environment. The first passage of this textbook is about the danger of the single story. It explores how looking at something from only one point of view can strip the dignity from people who are so much more than what they wear or how they worship.

To write this textbook, students and teachers from Russia and the United States helped gather stories and artwork. Experts from around the world also contributed, providing you with authentic material. These include famous academics, poets, musicians, writers, and tribal leaders. Of course, putting all this together was quite a challenge. And that role fell upon three of us. We are: Akiva, Vladlen, and Jonah. A Brooklynite, a Russian, and a Canadian. Three music lovers. Two dog lovers. And, as you've probably guessed, three lovers of knowledge. All of us worked together, dividing and conquering, challenging each other's comfort zone. We hope the product is fun and will inspire you to learn a bit more about Russia and the United States, indigenous populations, and contemporary issues that the best and brightest minds struggle to answer every day.



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*Akiva likes to think of himself as a simple man. He enjoys cutting vegetables, wandering in nature, and singing off key. Akiva has lectured and published in a wide range of fields including International Law, Linguistics, Art History, and Migration. Akiva has graduate degrees from Europe's two oldest universities (Bologna and Oxford) and has visited nearly 150 countries.*



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## THE DANGER OF A SINGLE STORY

“

The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar.

”

“

The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.

”

### 1 VOCABULARY

LOOK UP THE FOLLOWING VOCABULARY:

shift in perception, unintended consequence, pity, embrace, irritable, fascinating account, different versions, authenticity, dispossess, representative of, overlook, job vacancy

*Form a sentence using each word.*

### 2 LISTENING

LISTEN TO CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE’S TED TALK “THE DANGER OF A SINGLE STORY”:

- What is the significance of ginger beer in Adichie’s talk? [1:15]
- Why was Adichie’s American roommate disappointed by the Mariah Carey tape? [4:05]
- Why does Adichie say that stories matter? [17:25]

### 3 SPEAKING

- Prepare a two-minute presentation on a single-story experience you have had. What are the surrounding details? Were you able to change the single story into one more complex?
- Adichie often uses the present simple: “it robs,” “it makes,” “it emphasizes.” Why do you think she chooses the simple present and not the present continuous?